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Spiritan

A close-up portrait of an elderly man with white hair and glasses, smiling slightly. He is wearing a light-colored, vertically striped shirt. The background is a plain, light blue-grey color.

Fr. Mac:
End of an Era

The End of an Era

He slipped away quietly early in the New Year on the morning of January 3rd. He was never one to make a fuss. His passing marked the end of an era.

Fr. Garry McCarthy was the youngest member of the founding group of six Irish Spiritans who came to Woodstock, Ontario in 1954. And in the following years he, more than any other, influenced the direction the Spiritans would take in English Canada and the spirit which would permeate their work.

During his years among us Garry worked in pastoral ministry, he was a teacher and school administrator, he was a missionary in Africa, a retreat giver, a novice master, a regional superior, a spiritual director of note. His ministry with youth was particularly successful as they recognized and admired his simplicity and absolute transparency.

During his fifty-five years of ministry here, the leadership of the group rested in the hands of Irish-born Spiritans who followed Garry and the pioneer group across the Atlantic. Over the years they have been joined by other Spiritans from Portugal, Trinidad, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Poland and Nigeria, as well as native-born Canadians.

Looking back on his career, Garry would have seen how God had blessed the work he began.

During his lifetime Spiritans served the church in Canada by undertaking pastoral ministry in nine dioceses from Toronto to Vancouver, they founded and staffed Neil McNeil High School in Toronto, still a jewel in the Spiritan crown. Thirty-three Spiritans including Garry have taught there over its fifty year history and in conjunction with the Toronto Catholic District School Board, plans have been made to ensure that its future will be just as glorious as its past.

The group also pioneered the establishing of a new form of membership in the Spiritans. In Canada Lay Spiritans were first accepted into the congregation and bound to it by promises. Their work is seen as truly Spiritan and they share in all the benefits of the spiritual life of the group. Spiritans in many other countries have followed the Canadian example of welcoming lay people into their midst.

Another initiative of the group was the founding of VICS, to train, place and support qualified Canadians who are willing to serve in a mission territory for a period of two years or more. The VICS movement has been singularly successful, with an active group of former volunteers helping to support those currently in the mission fields. Over seven hundred VICS volunteers have served overseas.

The impact of Spiritans has been very significant in the areas of Catholic education especially in Ontario and Alberta, in the Catholic press through its magazine *Spiritan* as well as the fifteen books written by its members, in overseas missions where a new Spiritan foundation was opened in Papua New Guinea and in the significant financial support that was given to a variety of other missions.

The small seed planted in Woodstock in 1954 has grown in Garry's lifetime into a flourishing plant, and the time for a change of leadership has come.

Now Fr. Bob Colburn (Carrott River, Saskatchewan) is at the helm, Fr. Paul McAuley (Georgetown, Ontario) is treasurer and a wonderful mixture of Canadian Spiritans, some born in Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Poland, carry on the work. They will need the same level of friendship and support that you have afforded to Spiritan ministries for the past fifty-five years. I am certain that they will receive it.

Gerry FitzGerald CSSp

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The Damascus Experience

Jerry Creedon

To commemorate the birth of the Apostle to the Gentiles two thousand years ago, Pope Benedict XVI declared the period from June 28, 2008 to June 29, 2009 as the year of St. Paul.

A few months before, at one of his General Audiences in St. Peter's Square, the Pope had this to say about Paul of Tarsus: "He shines like a star of the brightest magnitude in the Church's history," and he went on to quote St. John Chrysostom's praise of Paul "as a person superior even to many angels and archangels." Few would grudge the Apostle to the Gentiles this high praise.

And yet there are many, even among the devout, who cannot warm to Paul. Even though we hear his inspiring words Sunday after Sunday in the second Reading at Mass, and are greeted at the beginning of many celebrations of the Eucharist with his beautiful prayer: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all," many find Paul difficult to understand.

Among them, incidentally, is St. Peter himself who had no inhibition about confessing to his readers that "there are some things our beloved brother Paul wrote to you that are hard to understand" (2 Peter 3:16)! But the criticism does not stop there. Some see Paul as verging on the fanatical, out of touch with the "real" world, benighted in his view of women.

I hope that the three pieces I am privileged to put together for *Spiritan* will help to portray St. Paul in a more favourable light.

Unimpressive first meeting

Our first meeting with Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, is, to say the least, unimpressive. (He was then named Saul, Schaoul, like King Saul, the first King of Israel. Saul, in Greek, means "waddler." A good reason for a name change!) We catch him minding the jackets of a mob that lynched Stephen, stoning him to death.

Paul saw nothing wrong with this. He had, after all, left his native Tarsus for Jerusalem to study the Law of Moses, the Torah, at the feet of one of the greatest

teachers of the time, Gamaliel. He not only knew the Law and the Jewish tradition, he was zealous for Israel's God and for the Torah, with a zeal which necessitated stamping out, by whatever means were necessary, all forms of disloyalty to the Torah among Jews.

Hence, once Stephen was accused of speaking against the temple and the Law (Acts 6:13), in Paul's eyes he deserved to be stoned.

Off to Damascus to seize Christians

Stephen's death did not satisfy Paul. He obtained authority from the chief priests in Jerusalem to go off to Damascus to seize Christians, men and women alike, and to drag them off to prison. They were, after all, renegade Jews, leading Israel astray from genuine loyalty to the one true God. What happened on the road to Damascus would change everything.

His God was too small

The first thing Paul learned on the road to Damascus was that his God was too small. God is God not only of the Jew but of the Gentile. In God's eyes "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). What happened on the road to Damascus was that, in Paul's own words, "Christ made me his own" (Philippians 3:12).

One new humanity

Paul would now see the world through the eyes of Christ "who has made both groups (Jews and Gentiles) into one, and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us... so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace" (Ephesians 2:14-15). Saul had come a long way since the lynching of Stephen.

A healing message for a broken world

The Damascus experience was not only a revelation to Saul of Tarsus, a vision, an



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illumination as he himself described it (2 Cor. 4:6); it was, above all, a call, a call to bring to a broken world the healing message. "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away" (the tyranny of the Law; the fanaticism of religious conviction; the presumption that we can, simply by doing what the law requires, become one of the elect).

Everything has become new

The Damascus experience is a rallying cry to look for a new world in the morning. "See, everything has become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). It is a challenge to us in our day and where we stand "to be ambassadors for Christ ... who has given us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18). Let us rise to the challenge and "not accept the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 6:1). ■



Resurrection Parish

Challenging the newly arrived to think about God

Daniel S. Sormani CSSp

PHILIPPINES

Cement bags, shovels, iron rods and wooden molds everywhere.

My little one-room temporary rectory is covered in sand and dust. Trying to clean it is an exercise in futility.

Yes, we're building again!

This time it's a beautiful grotto for Our Lady of China, a typical Chinese kiosk that you enter by going through the meditation garden, walking on the red wooden bridge that takes you over the fish pond filled with carp and Japanese koi. On the other side of the church, on land we recently purchased, the beginnings of the three-storey parish offices, formation centre, and rectory are being laid.

Heart and soul involvement

As always, the parishioners are amazing, volunteering to oversee all the work, tirelessly fundraising, getting involved heart and soul.

But the physical building and construction we've been slowly doing since 1998, when the bishop asked us to get land and form a parish for Chinese-Filipinos, has been nothing compared to the building of a community, a spiritual home that has become a central part of our lives.

New Chinese immigrants

What is new in the Resurrection of the Lord Chinese-Filipino Catholic Community, our strong missionary outreach?

In recent years the Philippines has welcomed a wave of immigrant Chinese from

the mainland. Unlike those Chinese who came here after the political upheaval of the Communist victory, or, before them, those who came poor and hungry, hoping for a better life, the new Chinese immigrants come with money they've saved over the years, and immediately open big stores. Iligan now is dotted with them.

Coming from the mainland, most have no religious identity. But their cultural identity and language draws them to us, and so we are learning what it means to be a parish community busy in *first evangelization*: making the gospel known to those who have never heard it.

Think about God

Because of the large number of parishioners who are married to Buddhists and

Taoists or whose parents follow those beliefs, we are used to the best of ecumenical relationships. But most of the newly arrived Chinese have no particular belief and have never been challenged to think about God. Until now!

Members of our parish family reach out to them in so many ways and invite them to get to know God, to come and see for themselves the goodness of the Lord. Many of the parishioners who normally speak Fookien at home, have been brushing up their Mandarin skills to welcome the newly arrived.

More questions than answers

As always, journeying with people seeking the Holy is a blessed and humbling experience. I recently gave Chinese Bibles to two young women who know almost nothing about Jesus or Christianity. Like most, they had never even spoken to a priest, let alone set foot in a church, until now. They have more questions than I have answers, but lucky for me these women are from Fujian Province, so we can speak Fookien Chinese. They often come for Mass and even help our choir sing in Mandarin.

The younger of the two told me she has decided that there really is a God, and that God is loving and here with us, just like Jesus says in the Bible. Then she told me that every noon when she hears the Angelus bell (they live near the church) she thinks: "God is right here with me!" How beautiful. And how challenging. When I hear the noon Angelus bell, I think: "Lunch now!" I always learn so much from the people around me.

Fr. Dan Sormani with Resurrection's Chinese seminarians.



Our parish makes the gospel known to those who have never heard it

Adopting seminarians

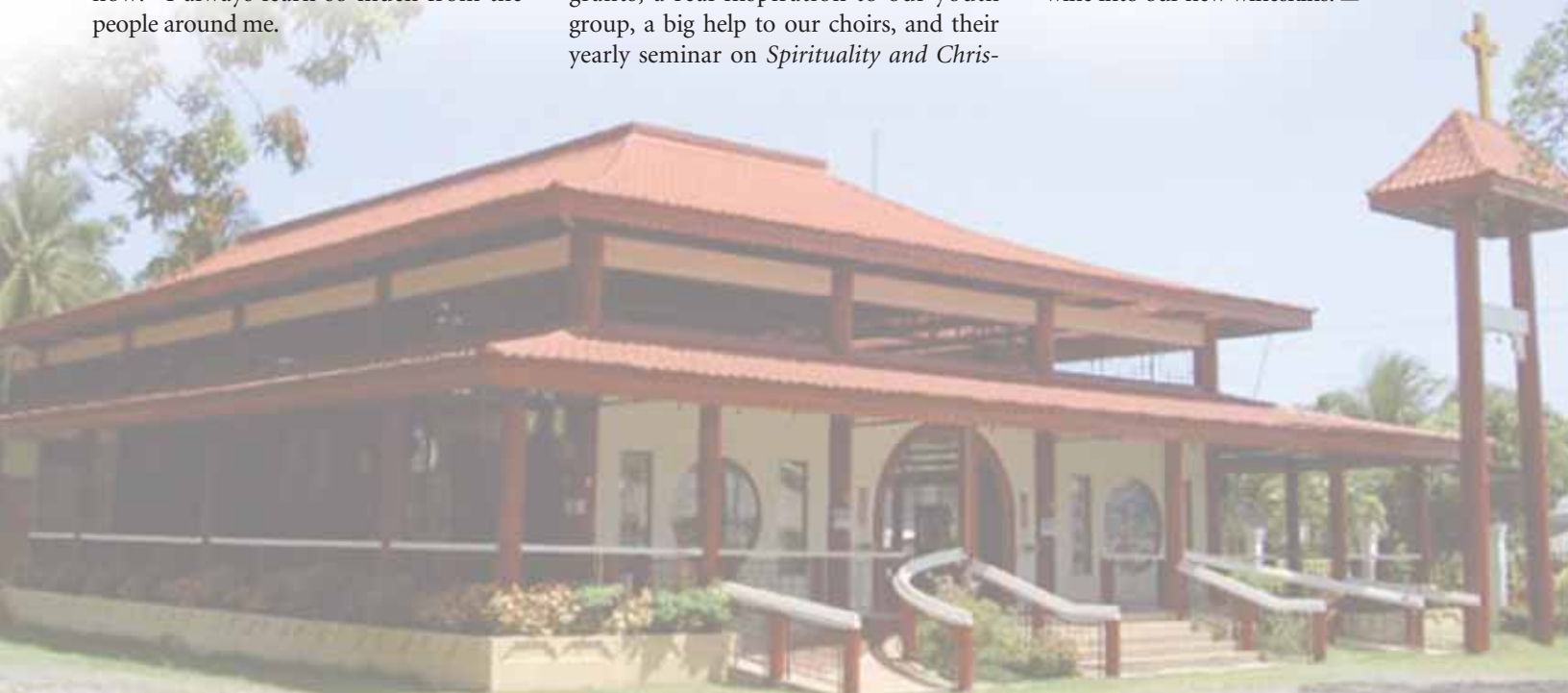
For the last three years we've been greatly blessed by seminarians from Mainland China. We were asked if we could "adopt" them for their semester break, introducing them to parish life in a cross-cultural setting and all it entails. They are a joy and a source of great blessing for the parish.

They're an invaluable help in our outreach to the new wave of Chinese immigrants, a real inspiration to our youth group, a big help to our choirs, and their yearly seminar on *Spirituality and Chris-*

tianity in China is always the most widely attended seminar we offer, attracting Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, Taoists, and those who aren't quite sure yet what they believe. Most of all, they are wonderful young men who've had to make incredible sacrifices joyfully, and are so obviously in love with God and all God's creation.

The first of Resurrection's seminarians to graduate, Joseph, stopped in Taiwan on his way home to the mainland. He enjoyed an evening with our Spiritan brothers there and is hoping for more collaboration between his home diocese and the Spiritans. The Holy Spirit certainly knows how to connect the dots ... Mainland China, the Philippines, and Taiwan.

The name of the parish says it all: Resurrection! New life, new joys, new blessings! The Lord keeps pouring new wine into our new wineskins. ■





Ronan White CSSp

How much **blood** does a computer suck out of your

MOZAMBIQUE

“The student who is afraid to ask questions is the one who is ashamed to learn.”

This was my opening line to the ten beaming students looking up at me from behind brand new shining laptop computers. It was the very first class held in the Mutaunha Computer School in the Mutaunha slum — the only school of its kind in any of the slums in Northern Mozambique.

I had spent quite a while the previous night thinking up that line and was pleased with myself as I delivered it. I was not quite so pleased a few seconds later when a lad in his late teens put up his hand and asked, “How much blood does the computer suck out of your fingers?”

None of the other ten students in the class laughed or indicated that this seemed a rather odd question — indeed their smiles had given way to solemn stares as they expectantly awaited my answer.

My own sense of excitement on this wonderful opening day took quite a dent. How could I possibly attempt to explain the intricacies of hardware, software, applications and memory if the students were under the impression that blood would be sucked out every time they touched a computer? I began to worry about how they might react on learning that computers transmit viruses!

Vampire electricity

After some further questioning, however, we managed to get to the root of the problem. It turned out that many adults in the slum, in an effort to warn their children about the dangers of playing with the electric wires that loosely overhang many of the streets, taught them that if they “touch electricity” it would suck out their blood. Almost all of the students had learned this

from a very young age. For most of them, who lived all their lives without electricity in their homes, this was one of their first experiences of touching such a vampirish appliance.

Having overcome this and a number of other unforeseen initial hurdles, as well as the expected hesitations and fears, the students got down to business and began moving forward with impressive speed. Two weeks into the course, they could find and open files, launch programs, confidently debate the advantages and disadvantages of a Linux operating system over a Microsoft system, and were typing at such speed that it might just draw blood.

The need for a computer school

It was the young people themselves who proposed the idea of establishing a computer school in the slum. We identified the

need through a study we carried out last year. It asked one simple question: "What is the single thing you wish you had access to in order to increase your possibilities of succeeding in life?" Over 80% responded that they wanted access to training in computer skills. Although such courses are available in the city centre, they are priced far beyond the possibilities of anyone living in the slums.

Once this need was presented, the local community responded immediately by offering a large room in their community centre for the project. The room was refurbished and the entire centre was upgraded with security gates and windows.

Meanwhile the past pupils of the Spiritan Blackrock College in Dublin swung into action by donating ten brand new, as well as a number of secondhand, laptops. Then earlier in the year while at home on holidays I was welcomed into the labs of the NGO "Camara" in Dublin's Digital Hub where volunteers patiently spent a week teaching me the ins and outs of the Edubuntu operating systems, before offering me a number of discs to load the system on to our computers.

The end result, just over a year since the young people presented us with their dream, is that we have our computer school up and running successfully — to the great joy and satisfaction of the local community. The current course, which has ten students, will run for two months, two hours a day, five days a week. We are charging the students just enough to cover the costs of elec-

tricity and a night watchman. This price is attainable for almost anyone living in the slum and at 50:1,600 ratio can be favorably compared to course price in the city.

anyone who wants to drop into the centre and learn how to touch-type properly outside of class hours. Word has travelled fast: although the starting date of the second course has not yet been announced, we have already been inundated with requests from people who wish to participate.

Although I am teaching the present course, we plan to train and accompany

Two weeks into the course, they were typing at such speed that it might just draw blood.

tricity and a night watchman. This price is attainable for almost anyone living in the slum and at 50:1,600 ratio can be favorably compared to course price in the city.

Inundated with requests

We use the new laptops for classes and have put the typing programme on to the second hand computers available for

one of the better students to give subsequent ones. We also plan to expand future courses and extend into a second room in the community centre where we hope to install the internet and start an internet café. Such a resource would be invaluable here, opening up new horizons and undiscovered joys for people who are only a two hour drive from the Indian Ocean, yet the majority of whom have never seen the sea.

On reflection, the question posed by the young man on opening day wasn't quite so strange after all. These computers have "sucked a lot of blood" — energy, work, time and money — from a wide spectrum of people and organizations in the realization of the young people's dreams. Now they are putting their own blood into it — the hours of computer classes and the daily relentless touch-typing drills.

I suppose the response I should have given was that if they want to succeed in their goal, the computers will indeed suck a lot of their blood. As the famous

American football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant once said, "There's a lot of blood, sweat, and guts between dreams and success." ■

fingers?



Centro Cultural:

The Soul of the Slum

Pat Clark CSSp

BRAZIL

Sao Paulo, the largest city in South America and the third largest in the world, has the worst and the best of everything. It is a place of fear and a place of welcome. It is made of concrete and steel yet it has a generous heart. It has the amenities and the wealth of a modern metropolis side by side with strident and heartbreaking poverty.

Spiritan Missionaries from Ireland have been living and working in this city since their arrival in Brazil in the mid 1960s. They are to be found mainly where the majority of the people struggle with unemployment, inadequate housing, crime, corruption and a chronic lack of leadership.

It is in these places, where no one wants to stop, that Spiritans have taken their motto "Rag-pickers of the Church" to heart, and gone out to disaffected youth, to

slum dwellers, to factories of striking and underpaid workers, to those in hospital and in prison, to children on the streets, to women caught up in prostitution, to the homeless and the landless in search of a roof or a plot to call their own.

"Be a fly on the wall till you know what the people are talking about. Then use your teacher-learner skills to help them become empowered."

A favela called Vila Prudente

It was in one of these places, a favela called Vila Prudente, with a population of 18,000, that Pat Clarke began his missionary career in Brazil. A maze of alleys and lanes winding their way through shacks built of discarded wood, tin or cardboard, Vila Prudente is one of an estimated two thousand favelas in the city of Sao Paulo.

The favela population is a phenomenon of the post 1964 military coup which saw the acceleration of the process of industrialization and hence the overwhelming need for cheap labour. Thus, hundreds of thousands of people began to migrate from the

impoverished North East of the country to work in the factories of the south, swelling the city of Sao Paulo to its inordinate size.

Luiz Inacio da Silva, together with his mother and his eight brothers and sisters, was one of this multitude of migrants. He was a shoe-shine boy on the streets, a factory worker, a union leader. He is now in his second term as President of Brazil.

And where could all these people live, who earned only slave wages? They found their own solution: the shacks and the slums, built on waste land, under bridges, on the slopes of hills.

It was there that they made their homes and re-created their close knit sense of community and its religious and artistic culture that they had brought from the rural North East. And they needed it, because they were despised and rejected by the common citizen of Sao Paulo who regarded them as primitive and dangerous intruders.

Paulo Freire

It was into this that Pat Clarke stepped somewhat unwittingly, 30 years ago, not knowing really what to do or where to begin. He was conversant with the educational theory of Paulo Freire, the well known Brazilian philosopher, and they were later to become good friends. They had met at a seminar in Paris in 1974, so when Pat was appointed to Brazil two years later, Paulo's advice was; "Don't begin with ready made answers and ready made projects. Be a fly on the wall till you know what the people are talking about. Then use your teacher-learner skills to help them become empowered."

Reflecting on his early years in Vila Prudente, Pat remarks; "The favela has been a place of learning, a university, a street school. Sitting in a wooden shack with a sewer flowing under the floorboards, rats hopping around somewhere in the background, conversation flows in a way it rarely does in our self-satisfied 'suburbanity'. Here, some of life's most important truths have been spoken. And unspoken."

Coincidentally, many of Paulo Freire's key ideas coincided with a time of great excitement in the Brazilian Church. The time when Liberation Theology was in the ascendant. When, to be among the poor was a privilege and challenge to personal conversion. The time when the great Latin American Episcopal Conferences of Medellin, Puebla and Santo Domingo had given the Church important new insights regarding the preferential option for the poor and the spiritual integrity of the human person.

Centre for Culture and the Arts

All this was in the air and in the books. But, it needed some concrete expression. Some form of inculturation. Pat hit upon

Painting with Pride in Vila Prudente



Fernandez Peira de Silva, 21, lives in the Vila Prudente favela in Sao Paulo, Brazil. When he was six months old his parents moved from the mountains of north eastern Brazil to Sao Paulo, the country's biggest city, looking for work. Fernandez has three brothers and a sister.

When he was ten, a friend invited Fernandez to join him at a painting group for children and young people at the Centro Cultural run by Movimento de Defesa (MDF). Students learn portrait painting and are encouraged, through art, to learn to really know the other person. Here young people learn to be proud of where they live, and learn that they all have gifts to offer the community.

There is always hope

Fernandez now teaches at the Centre two days a week, at a graphics shop for three days and he also takes English classes. He believes that art can be used to change the community. "There is always hope. Look at me, at ten years of age I went to the Centre to learn to draw. I hardly spoke and was very shy. I have come to respect myself as a human being and to value the gifts I have to offer others," he says.

Drama is taught as well. The Centre has a special purpose for teaching drama. Groups perform role plays in the community to educate those who are unable to read and write.

"Without places like the Centro Cultural there is very little hope for change. The Centre is like an oasis, where we learn self-respect, respect for others and where we develop a sense of dignity and self-worth," Fernandez says.

Now that he teaches, he wants the children who come to the Centre to feel that same love and respect that he was shown by his own teachers at the Centre. He says, "I hope my young friends feel the warmth, the love and care that was given to me so that they will feel and live the dignity that can be achieved as an artist."

Reprinted with permission from Caritas, Australia. Photo: Sr. Margaret Fyfe, C.S.B.
Donations for Fr. Pat and the Arts' Centre may be sent to *Spiritan* in the form of a cheque made out to 'The Spiritans' with an indication that it is for Centro Cultural.



the idea of a Centre for Culture and the Arts when instinct might have suggested a soup kitchen or food handouts.

He saw that transformation had to begin not only from without, but also and fundamentally, from within. That culture was food too. Food for the heart and the soul. And that though the material needs of people were essential to the preaching of the gospel, on their own they were completely inadequate. Even a betrayal.

Thirty years later, the Centre for Culture and the Arts is the soul of the slum. It is a place of joy and of learning. A place of challenge and of hope. A place where a child can have his childhood returned to him. A place of celebration and of faith. A place that many will look back on and be able to say, "It was here that my life changed forever."

Of course, the police still come regularly to the favela to collect their protection money from the drug dealers, who are armed, operate openly and arrogantly, and check out through their communications system, every person that enters the community.

Years ago, though there were more gang wars and bullets, it seemed, ironically, less forbidding than now. Now, the smaller gangs have been taken over and incorporated into a kind of globalized parallel power that exercises control within the prisons and on the streets, and is capable of striking at any place or time, over a large area of the city.

A fair degree of protection

Fortunately, at the Centro Cultural, the staff and the children enjoy a fair degree of protection, mainly because of the role of the church in the lives of the people, and also because a fair number of the children in the project know or have relatives connected with the drug trade. It may not be the best kind of protection, but at least it is based on a certain respect and trust.

Transformation had to begin not only from without, but also and fundamentally, from within.

Centre has spread its wings

Despite all that, and for many good reasons such as dedicated staff, doggedness in the face of adversity, donors who have given what they did not have, the Centre has spread its wings well beyond the favela.

It is now regularly invited to put on exhibitions in schools, colleges and art galleries around the city. It has also been involved in major international events like the World Social Forum and the Brazilian National Arts Forum. The impetus for this came from a number of different sources.

One is the availability of art galleries displaying examples of classical and modern paintings and sculpture, to which the children of the project are regular visitors. Another source is the interest on the part of schools and colleges, who have got to

know the project, in inviting the children to display their work. Yet another, was the arrival in 1998 of Irish artist Brian Maguire, who had been invited to participate in a convention of international artists at the Sao Paulo Bi-annual Art Exhibition.

The culture of the favela

Brian knew nobody in San Paulo, but a mutual acquaintance had given him Pat's address. He was very impressed with what he saw at the Vila Prudente arts centre and noticed that nothing in the Sao Paulo Museum of Arts reflected the culture of the favelas.

So he worked with the most talented artists in Centro Cultural and submitted their work as his exhibit. For the first time visitors to the city's Museum de Arte were made aware of the talents and the culture of the majority of the citizens of Brazil.

The young artists in the Centre have moved away from simple representations to more complex works which show telling insights and question the nature of their society. They are able to tap the creative mystery that is in everybody, the dream to be able to believe in and feel and express their worth as human beings.

With the help of Brian Maguire, the art from the cultural centre has been exhibited in Hong Kong, the U.S. and Ireland. Brian has started a project in the Dublin slums

modeled on what he observes in Vila Prudentes. Some pieces from the centre hang in galleries around Sao Paulo.

Building a new future

And in Vila Prudente a new building is arising. The bottom floor is an open space for circus, band, dance, judo, and theatre. The top floor is a chapel for meditation and yoga. The design is architecturally unique, with stained glass windows made from discarded wine bottles. The ideas of Brian Maguire and Pat Clarke CSSp have fallen on good soil and are yielding a hundredfold.

Paulo Freire wrote "The future is not something hidden from us. The future is something we build in the present." Twelve years after his death, the future of Brazil is being built in Vila Prudente. ■

Requiem for a Heavyweight

Homily at the funeral of Garry McCarthy CSSp

Gerald FitzGerald CSSp

It is not easy for me to perform this final service for someone who has been such a close friend for so many years. When I arrived in Canada as a young priest, straight out of the seminary, the holy oils scarcely dry on my hands, he was the Vice-Principal and Dean of Neil McNeil School.

He was a father and mentor to me. I admired him. I laughed at his ways behind his back. Like all the other rookies in the school, the Grade Nine students, I feared him. I cannot say I liked him.

But time passed and I grew in age and wisdom and now Garry was a colleague, a companion, and true confrere. And that condition of mutual friendship lasted for the next forty years.

In his final years of his life when his memory was decaying, the relationship evolved into one of father and son. He would sit in my office for hours as business continued to be done around him. Visitors to the office would make a fuss of him. When he finally moved to the House of Providence he had reverted even more into childhood and I would bring him an ice-cream cone and tell him jokes, just as if he was five years old again.

Final farewell

And so it is with a mixture of sadness and happiness that I make this contribution to our final farewell to this wonderful man. Your presence in such large numbers today for the funeral of an old man who has been out of circulation for three years speaks far more eloquently of his character than any words of mine.

My words are not by way of biography or eulogy. All of you here present knew Garry personally and benefited from his service and friendship. Each of you has a eulogy of personal memories which I cannot embellish.

The gift of Garry

No, my words are to express thanks to God for the gift of Garry to us and for the

unique blessings each of us got from our relationship with him. God enabled Garry to grow into a very spiritual person and we all benefited spiritually from our relationship with him.

From his earliest years until his death, Garry was a very simple man. He was absolutely transparent. He had no guile. What you saw was exactly what you got. He had no hidden agenda. He had nothing cooking on the back burner. He was absolutely and ever child-like. For this reason he attracted people who could recognize his spiritual qualities as well as people who saw him as the soft touch, which he was all his life long.

Con-artists

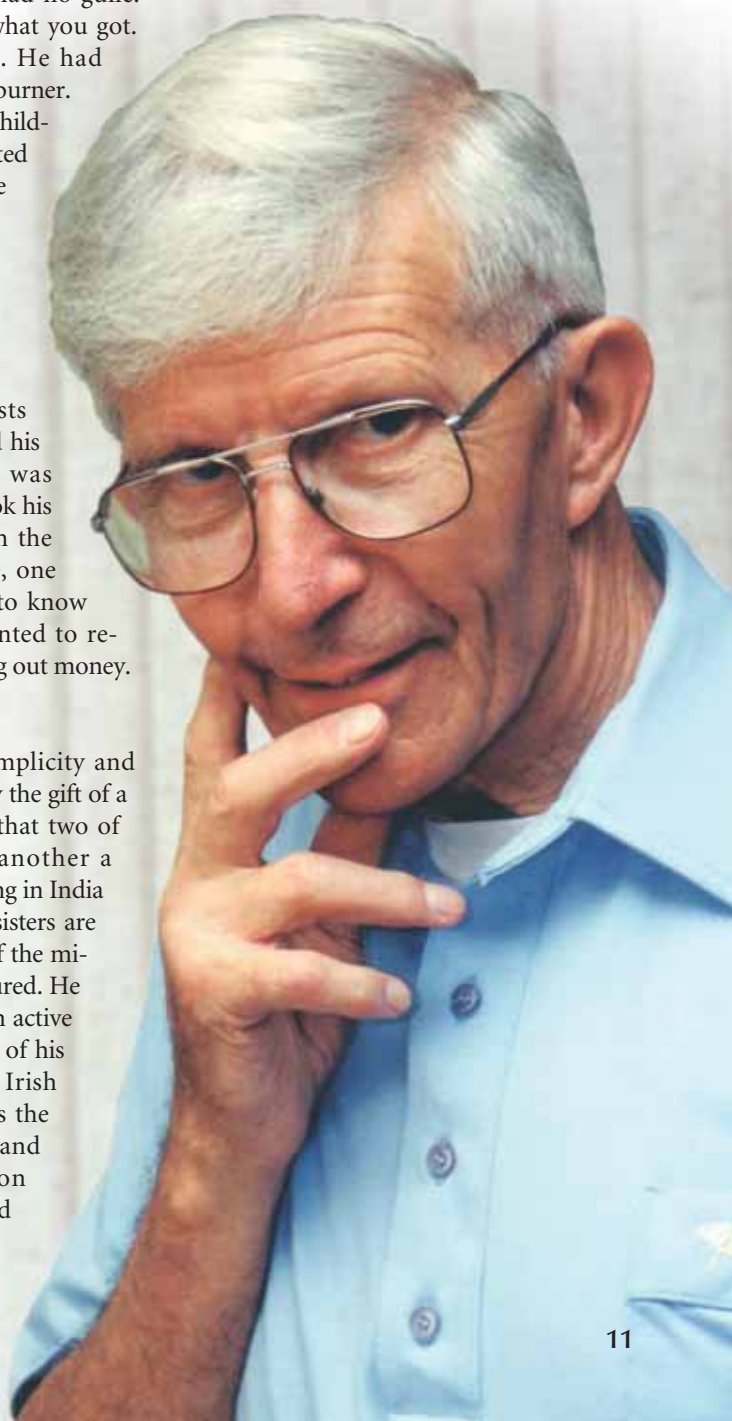
A collection of con-artists called him day and night and his monthly living allowance was quickly depleted. After we took his cheque book from him with the onset of Alzheimer's disease, one indignant caller demanded to know what priest had been appointed to replace Garry in his job of giving out money.

His family

As well as the gifts of simplicity and transparency, God gave Garry the gift of a wonderful family. The fact that two of the boys became priests, another a Christian Brother now working in India and the fact that two of his sisters are nuns gives some indication of the milieu in which Garry was nurtured. He developed a deep faith and an active prayer life under the tutelage of his parents, his parish and the Irish Christian Brothers. This was the spirituality of the twenties and thirties in Ireland, heavy on obedience to rules, on sin and guilt; light however on God's mercy, love and forgiveness.

Discipline

This spirituality was strengthened and reinforced in his seminary training. It was this life and vision he brought to Neil McNeil, the school he co-founded with Fr. Michael Troy and of which he was the Dean of Discipline. And discipline was at



the core of Catholic spirituality in that era. He had the unpleasant role of reprimanding and punishing everyone, student or staff, who was out of line. And yet he retained the respect of both groups because of his inherent fairness and honesty and the fact that he pushed himself harder to higher levels in the areas of obedience and performance than he demanded of others.

He often explained to the boys the meaning of the motto he had chosen for the school, 'Fidelitas in Arduis.' He translated it

as 'sticking with it when the going gets tough.' The student body bought into this ideal. It was the philosophy which drove all the school programs. It marked those early years when resources and facilities were lacking, excuses were not accepted, and performance had to be first-rate in everything.

Looking back it was a very fascist model and yet the alumni of that era never cease to amaze me by remembering those years with great fondness and Garry McCarthy with kind memories.

Neil McNeil boys

Let me digress for a moment at this time to address the Neil McNeil boys gathered here in the transept in their school uniforms. I am so glad that you have been invited to form a guard of honor at the procession. The Spiritans, their friends, benefactors, the members of the community at large are so impressed by the standards of excellence you manifest in the areas of academics, athletics, community service and race relations. Your good name has spread so far that the school no longer has room to accept all new applicants. The


way you look after each other, especially those among you with special needs, is exemplary. And what you have by way of spirit and service was implanted in the school fifty years ago by Garry McCarthy.

A disastrous appointment

But God did not leave Garry very long in Neil McNeil, the environment which he loved. In 1963 he was appointed superior of the Spiritans in Ontario. It was a disastrous appointment. It began nine sad and painful years for him.

Garry did not have the leadership skills, the talents or the desire for this office. He begged to be relieved of the position but his standards of obedience, like that of Jesus in Gethsemane, lead him to say, 'Not my will but thine be done'.

He had to leave the community and boys of Neil McNeil, both of which he loved. He was trapped in an office job for which he had no aptitude or inclination. He took upon himself the responsibility for the lives of all the Spiritans in Ontario. He wanted all to live the religious life in the manner in which he did. He redoubled his



Garry blesses his father on the day of his ordination.

Sister Kathleen Lichti CSJ

Fr. Mac

I write this as one who has known Fr. Mac since he came to Canada in 1954, when the original band, with Fr. Brolly as their leader, arrived in Woodstock, Ontario.

Our mother, Kay Lichti, was one of the first housekeepers for the priests who then lived at 904 Dundas Street. Fr. Mac, being the youngest of the group, was literally "the new kid on the block" and it was both humorous and a privilege to see him understand and become acclimatized to the "Canadian" culture of that day.

Mom was a big help to him as he struggled to find his way in this new land and way of life. He too would often be the one to help her with some of the household tasks of 904. I knew that she found in him a faithful confidant. Although Mom was only a year older than him, Fr. Garry always called her "Mom" when he spoke of her to us. It did not take too long for him to endear himself to our family, the "Lichtis".

Piano lessons

In establishing the new church (now the small K of C hall at the back of the present church) many preparations were made. As the first organist of the new church, it was an honour to have this position and to work closely with Fr. Mac who became the interim choir leader. His love of music and determination to learn how to read music to play the piano was most inspiring. Although I had only a few years more in music education than he did, he asked me to give him piano lessons. One of the beautiful memories I have is of his very gifted singing ability when he would sing The Holy City.

prayers and mortifications. The scruples which had troubled him from his youth intensified. He was unfulfilled and unhappy.

The inevitable happened. He had a series of nervous breakdowns. God was leading him through the dark night of the soul. And then, as suddenly as had happened to his great model St. Paul, he was knocked off his horse. He told me the story soon afterwards.

'I cannot carry the burden anymore'

"It was about midday. I was kneeling at my bedside in a rehabilitation centre for religious. I was in the darkest despair. I looked up at the figure of the crucified Jesus on the wall above the bed. I said, from the depths of my sorrow and despair 'Jesus I have done everything you have asked of me since I was a little boy. I have burned myself out in your service. I have nothing to show for it except mental illness and failure. I cannot carry the burden anymore. I am handing it over to you'.

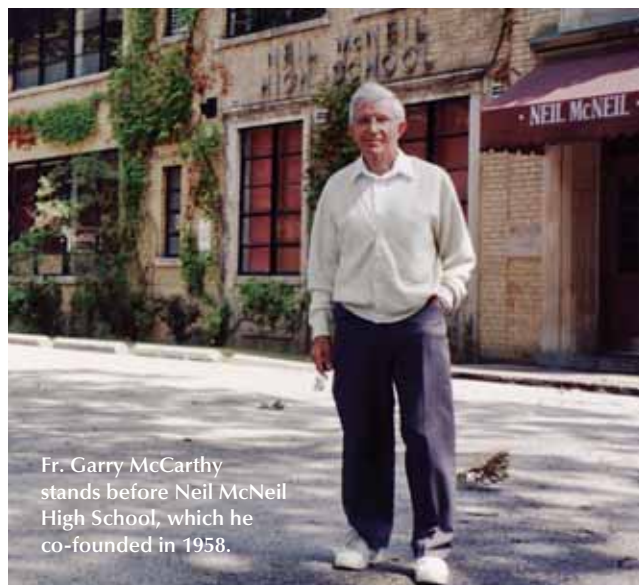
"And the minute these words were out of my mouth a wonderful calmness descended on me. For the first time in

months, I was at peace. My own personal failures and those of the Spiritans in my care were no longer a heavy burden to be borne. I had only to work in the vineyard. I suddenly realized that it is God who produces the results."

After his conversion

Garry returned to us a new man with a new relationship to God and a new relationship with others. No longer judgmental, no longer fearful, he followed this wonderful conversion of 1972 with thirty-one years of service in the Lord's vineyard across Canada and in Nigeria. His ministry won for him a large number of admirers and friends of whom those here present are but a fraction. Garry retired to a life of prayer and community in 2003.

So we gather here to celebrate God's goodness to Garry as shown by the road on



Fr. Garry McCarthy stands before Neil McNeil High School, which he co-founded in 1958.

which He led him, a road that each one here walked along with him for short or long distances. For the privilege of this experience, we give thanks to God.

Another link with our history is gone. Rest in peace, Garry. You never were one to make a fuss. All the Olympians are heading for the exit. ■

His involvement with families added so much to the life of the parish. He established a scout group and was able to really connect with the young boys of the parish in a meaningful way, and leave them with lasting values to cherish. I do remember on one occasion when he visited our home, that my brother Gary (then only about 13 and a new scout) played a trick on him with a loaded cigar!

Support in trauma

When our brother Bud (16) was killed in a car accident in 1957, it was Fr. Mac who was the one to identify Bud's body, as my parents, in their shock and grief, were unable to do so. The very next day, probably having been up all night with mom and dad, my two sisters, Mary and Eileen, and my brother, Gary, he came to Mount St. Joseph in London to tell me of Bud's very sudden and tragic death. I was in the Novitiate of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London at the time. His continued support in that trauma and the years thereafter were indeed a treasured gift.

It was he who encouraged me to pursue the call that I was experiencing to enter the community and he was there to preside at my reception into the community and years later at the temporary and final vows ceremonies. Not only did he bury my brother Bud, he was also very instrumental in the sacramental life of my siblings: First Communion, Penance, Confirmation, Marriages.

He became a true and loyal friend to the community as well. The Sisters of St. Joseph of London owe much to him for the ways in which he was available for retreats, spiritual direction and as an ongoing source of support to so many of the Sisters.

**"You may be scarred,
but you still go to
HIM, scars and all
and are totally
accepted that way."**

A year with the St. Joseph Sisters

When he had to return from Nigeria, it was only fitting that he was able to spend a year with us at Holy Rosary Convent in Windsor in the early 70s where he was able to rest, read, pray. He felt he had to "justify" his presence there and offered to paint the wrought iron fence surrounding the property ... not a job that was completed in just a few days! Because of declining health, many of the Sisters who would have loved to be present at his wake and funeral were unable to make the trip. We are very present to you, the Spiritan community, and to you, Fr. Garry's family.

A loyal and true friend

His friendship over the years has been loyal, true and an inspiration and it was very difficult to see his mental diminishment creep up and take away the Fr. Mac we used to know. His presence continues to be felt and the memories of his unwavering perseverance to be faithful to his commitment to God in the midst of his own personal weaknesses is an encouragement to us all to continue in the spirit of optimism and hope. One of his expressions was, "You may be scarred, but you still go to HIM, scars and all and are totally accepted that way." He truly believed this and lived it.

Thank you, Fr. Mac, Fr. Garry, for a life well lived so that we too can learn from our experience and love of you how to "carry on" and bring joy and hope to our lives and to those whom we touch. ■

Loving God, we entrust the women, men and children who live as migrants and refugees to your maternal protection.
Teach us to recognize your Son in the migrant who labours to bring food to our tables.
Teach us to recognize your Son in the refugee seeking protection from persecution, war, and famine.
Teach us to recognize your Son in those who are victims of human trafficking.
Teach us to recognize your Son in the asylum seeker imprisoned for fleeing without documents.

Spiritans lay welcome mat out for Iraqi refugee family

Carolyn Girard, Catholic Register

CANADA

Five Iraqi children and their father continue to marvel over God's providence for them after a month of living at the Spiritans' newly opened Brottier Refugee House in Toronto.

Forced to leave Iraq after death threats from Shia Muslims more than two years ago, the family separated, leaving the

mother (who had no passport) and the three youngest children, now aged 6, 8 and 12, with a brother in another town, while the father and his two teenage sons, now 15 and 17, took refuge in Syria. They secured an apartment there with financial assistance from the United Nations. Meanwhile, the father continued trying to get the other half of his family passports so they could cross the border.

With tears rimming his eyes, Hassan Shamsi, 65, recounted his story through an interpreter while seated in the Brottier House living room.

There was a bomb and she was killed

"Less than a month (after leaving), they called me from Iraq and ... while doing shopping, there was a bomb and she was



Photo by Carolyn Girard/Catholic Register

Teach us to recognize your Son not only in the strangers in our midst but in the gifts they bring: the invitation to conversion, communion and solidarity.

Teach our Canadian lawmakers to recognize your Son in the establishment of laws that protect the rights and dignity of everyone, especially those most vulnerable in our country. Amen

Sources: Sisters of Mercy, CAFOD, Centre of Global Concern Gather, Jesuit Refugee Service (USA)

killed," he said, speaking of his wife's death. "I was told I had to come and get my kids and I said I couldn't even feed the ones I had with me."

When they had left Iraq, all they had were the clothes on their backs and the change in their pockets, he said.

Finally able to get his youngest son and two daughters across the border to Syria, the six of them lived in a tiny one-bedroom apartment, unable to afford a bigger place and barely able to buy groceries.

With their refugee application about to expire, the family waited anxiously not knowing what would happen to them.

Mary would be their mom

"I had been through difficulties and awkward situations and I felt there was no solution," Shamsi's 17-year-old son

He and his children had grown up with the belief that they and their Christian neighbours were all children of God.

Mohammed said through an interpreter. "So I went to the church and prayed in front of a statue of the Virgin Mary. I prayed and the next day it was solved."

Mohammed said that as they had lost their mother, he decided Mary would be their mom. He says he believes his prayers are the reason why they soon received news that refugee sponsors in Toronto would welcome them with open arms.

Mohammed's father explained that Sunni Muslims and Christians lived peacefully side-by-side in their community before dissenting Muslims moved in. He and his children had grown up with the belief that they and their Christian neighbours were all children of God. Mohammed said he enjoyed and trusted his Christian classmates in Iraq so much that he is applying to attend a Catholic high school here in Toronto.

He asked Spiritan Father Alex Osei to put an image of the Blessed Virgin Mother

in each bedroom and has accompanied him to the occasional Mass.

Spiritans helping refugees since 1979

Osei has been living at Brottier House, which is nestled in east end Toronto, to assist the Shamsis since they moved into their temporary home December 15. The Spiritans in Canada have been helping refugees since 1979, although their former Brottier House was closed about five years ago. Osei was quite enthusiastic about the new house and the many families the Spiritans plan to welcome there this year.

"As a director, I help them to integrate and I give them emotional and spiritual support ... and help them heal their wounds," he said. "(The Shamsi family) are very happy here and every day the father expresses gratitude to the Spiritans for their help."

Osei says the family tries to be as self-sufficient as they can, with the father cooking meals and getting his children ready each morning, but his health has been poor. The three youngest children recently enrolled in elementary school.

"The bishops' call to help these refugees is very important to us," Osei said. "And these refugees loved the Christians; they lived among them."

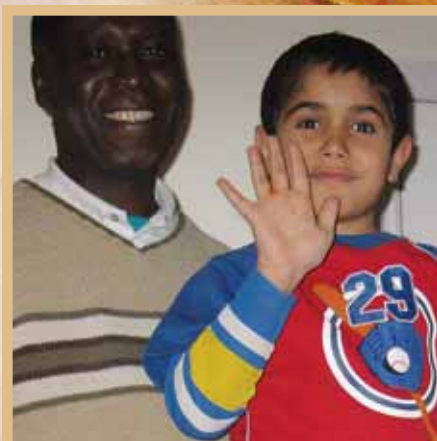
"Like rocks with no life"

When asked how he feels about the help they have received through Catholic Cross Cultural Services, Shamsi said he thanks God every day.

"I thought there was no hope (in Iraq), that we were like rocks with no life," he said. "We saw bodies in the street, heard bullets ... and (in Syria) I thought 'how could I go to Canada not knowing English.' But Osei made everything easy for me. He gave us life. He made us feel again like we are humans with dignity, which we did not feel in our country," he said.

Refugees stay at Brottier House for just a couple of months before moving into a more permanent home. ■

Reprinted with permission from *The Catholic Register*.



The Shamsi family, with the help of Fr. Alex Osei, has settled in nicely in the Spiritans' Brottier House in east-end Toronto.

Her blood in his veins

Dr. Ellen Einterz

KOLOFATA, NORTH CAMEROON

The bent old woman lunged into my consulting room, a floppy three-year-old cradled in her arms. Her lopsided lafaiya, maroon with flecks of faded silver, had fallen to her shoulders. Two brass encircled each earlobe and tin bangles each wrist. On her feet were plastic flip flops, broken and mended: green on the left foot, blue on the right. Desperately, as though the words themselves were on their knees, accustomed to being refused, she pleaded, "Tata-nyi, tata-nyi." My child, my child.

After hours

It was after six o'clock and only an orange glow was left rimming the mountains to the west. The waiting room, cavernous and still, no longer vibrated with the day's bustling crowd of men, women and children suffering coughs, fevers, rashes, intestinal ailments, complicated pregnancies, aches, pains and wounds. A handful of white-coated nurses and two stick-bearing night watchmen shuffled from task to task. The lights were on, a hundred fluorescent tubes defying the darkness about to descend.

I looked up from my papers. An oil tanker had exploded outside one of our villages one night several weeks earlier, and two other trucks and a van full of passengers had gone up in flames. Of the twenty-two victims, nineteen had survived and been hospitalized for weeks. The government now wanted a report.

Alive but unconscious

I motioned the women to sit in the chair beside me. "*Martiné!*" she begged. Please! The boy was alive but unconscious and on fire. His unseeing eyes rolled up under their lids, and the conjunctivae were milk white. He breathed rapidly and too deeply, each intake of air stretching the skin taut over strained ribs. I felt the lead-



Dr. Ellen Einterz sets up a transfusion on an anaemic child.

ing edge of the overworked spleen that had swelled past its bony cage. Unwieldy in the old woman's embrace, his neck, spine and limbs were limp. And yet he was a fine boy: well nourished, unblemished, cleanly dressed and coiffed.

"His mother is in the field," the woman said. "I am his grandmother. He is my grandson."

"How long has he been sick?"

"No, no. Only now. I came right away."

Already two weeks sick

I held her grandson's hands and showed her the whiteness of the palms. "Not now," I said. "How many days, how many weeks?" They lived in the village, less than a mile from the hospital.

She nodded. "Two weeks," she replied and then added hastily, "but not like this. Sometimes he would get up. Sometimes he would play before lying down again. The fever would come, and then it would go.

But today..." she shook her head and looked into the boy's blank face, as if waiting for something important to happen any minute, "today he is not getting up at all." She wrapped her arms around him and clutched him fiercely to her chest. "*Martiné, martiné,*" she said again. Please, please.

Killer mosquitoes

After last year's destructive floods but shortened rainy season, this year's rains were just about perfect. The harvest was good, and the off-season millet is thriving. But the plentiful rains brought plentiful mosquitoes, and in this part of Africa, mosquitoes, ferocious bearers of falciparum malaria, are killers. The parasite enters its host's red blood cells and multiplies madly until, in their millions, the cells burst.

Two weeks is a long time for a child's body to battle such a potent enemy. In Kolofata our tragedy is that malaria is so common and children are so frequently ill that too often sick is just another word for normal; sickness is not recognized for what it is. Until it is too late.

The tests begin

The emergency lab tech came in and quietly and expertly hurried her array of tests. A tube of blood here, another tube there, a drop here, a drop there, centrifuge on, centrifuge off, ceramic plate, glass slide, test strip, second test strip, third, fourth, stopwatch on, stopwatch off, stir, spin, drop, note.

We do not have a blood bank. An anaemic patient is transfused with blood

from a matching screened relative, and sometimes most of a family must be tested before we find a donor who both matches and screens negative for all of a variety of potentially deadly viral infections.

Grandmother's blood

The grandmother matched and passed the tests, and we drew a half pint of her blood. The night nurse in the children's ward quietly and expertly sponged the child down, inserted a nasogastric tube, started an I.V., administered injections, and fed medicines and sugar water through the NG. The lab tech brought the bag of fresh blood and the nurse set it up and adjusted the drip rate then asked the grandmother to sit by the child and hold her hands over his. "If he wakes up, don't let him pull out the needle, you understand?" The grandmother nodded. She sat and held her hands over the boy's hands and bowed her head over his head as if by some magnetic power she might draw him back to her.

A long night

Her blood, drop by tiny drop, flowed into his vein. The nurse left for the delivery room, and a young mother gave birth to a six pound girl. A delirious AIDS patient in the male ward was calmed. A farmer, his



Dr. Ellen Einterz with a young friend at the hospital.

right cheek split open like an overripe tomato, required sutures; he would tell his story in the morning. The hours passed.

Owls whoood, crickets chirped, stray dogs prowled stealthily. The moon arced across the sky. By dawn, the boy was conscious. He was weak. He could not sit, could not hold up his head. But he was alive, and he could speak, a tiny whispering sound. "*Keleewa,*" he murmured when I asked him how he was, and he looked at me sleepily but held his gaze. "*Keleewa sulé.*" In good health. The grandmother, exhausted from her vigil, lay sound asleep beside him.

Tiny whispering sounds are the most joyous of all. ■



Welcome the Different Jean Vanier

"Peace" — we all want peace. We want peace of heart. We want peace with our families. But let's face it — we're in a world of war.

Here in Canada there's no immediate war, but our world is a broken world. We have all the situations of the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan where we have Canadian soldiers, all the situations around Pakistan and India and, of course, many other situations of civil war throughout the world.

Maybe one of the causes of all that is the terrible growing gap between the rich and the poor.

I remember being in Santiago, Chile, some years ago coming from the airport to the city. The man who was driving me said, "On the left are all the slum areas of Santiago, on the right are all the rich houses." And he said, "Nobody ever crosses that line. They don't cross that line. Everybody is frightened."

So, we want peace. But we're all in reality people who can make peace.

How do we make peace? By listening to the different, understanding people, sharing. We can all become men and women of peace or we can become men and women of war, where I'm fighting for myself, for my rights and I'm not opening up to what other people need.

So, peace begins not just in my heart but also in the way I respect others who are different.

"Welcome the different" is the road to peace.

Mission to Youth Today — A Response

Noel Cooper

Fr. George Boran's articles in *Spiritans* for February, May and August 2008, offer several observations about young people in today's "post-modern" society. Increasing numbers of young people have become disaffiliated with the faith community, sometimes on principle, and sometimes out of apathy or disinterest. If we hope to call them back, we must respect their point of view, and perhaps even change some of our own traditional positions. Mission To Youth Today offers perceptive opinions about the relationship of today's young people to the church.

Faith is especially an encounter with a person, Jesus Christ. The acceptance of Jesus means the acceptance of his teaching, of his lifestyle, his world vision, and his formula for human happiness.

Tragically, the decisive reason for the failure of the older generation to pass on the faith is that so few people (including priests, teachers and parents) give evidence of a flourishing relationship with Jesus and an inspirational understanding of his vision.

The only hope for cracking the walls of indifference around contemporary generations is contagious discipleship. Post-modern true believers, where are you?

The sacred

There is a return to some sort of spirituality that will give answer the deeper needs of the human person ... but unfortunately, the institutional church is not satisfying that thirst.

The spirituality that appeals to many today is privatized, self-centred, superficial, new age, vague and independent of organized religion.

I agree with the direction of these observations, but would prefer to amend the descriptors that are intentionally negative. I believe that young people today are



developing a valid spirituality independent of organized religion. In keeping with the democratic and individualistic spirit of the past 300 years, thoughtful young people are seeking strong self-esteem (not self-centredness) based on respect for themselves and others.

The institutional church is not satisfying their thirst for a valid spirituality. Regrettably, all of us have failed to express the “good news” of the New Testament in a way that supports their quest for wholeness in life.

Priority of the subjective

An important aspect of postmodern culture is the shift from a collective to a private ideal ... Youth focus on the problems of daily life ... and retreat to the private sphere to search for meaning there. These young people do not seek to change society from within — they prefer to live on its margins.

People of ancient times didn't understand their lives as individually important, but as meaningful to the extent that they contributed to the community.

However, today's emphasis on the individual can be a valid extension of Jesus' offer of wholeness to those who accept the saving action of God. Christianity itself has emphasized the value of the individual with its emphasis on personal morality and the teaching that life after death would be based on reward for each person's good deeds.

Jesus' brilliant paradoxical insight is that we will be most truly ourselves if we give ourselves in love to others. He didn't support traditional religious ordinances; he proclaimed that God would support each of us on our journey towards wholeness. The great impediment to personal wholeness, for adults as well as youth, is not “private ideal” but selfishness. We adult believers must inspire young people to build their wholeness on self-esteem and self-giving love in openness to God's saving power.

Certainly we should help students become involved in their communities, but we must realize that many of them belong to a great many communities, and church is very low on their list of affiliations. Both students and parents are involved in their family, their school or workplace, their communities of friendships and their recreational communities, as well as “society.” At best for most people, church comes after all those other communities as “something which I care about.”

Interior silence

Many young people have difficulty with being alone. The process of taking control of one's own life and building a personality ... should not depend on the opinions of the peer group.

My perception is that most young people do look within, and wonder about their abilities and disabilities, about how they appear to others, and about the meaning of their lives. Most parents would probably complain that their beloved offspring have an active interior life, but that they refuse to communicate it to their elders.

Peer groups are of great value for most young people. Friends lovingly promote each other's self-esteem, smarten them up when they do something stupid, and cooperate in solving problems and dealing with the future. Students whose families are dysfunctional often rely on their peers for everything that their family should be giving them. Of course, some groups of friends are negative influences, and students should recognize harmful friendships and make decisions to find better friends for their own good.

Relationships

Youth have an intense desire to establish relationships with one another.

Educators should promote healthy relationships, with the recognition that some of these will be characterized by increasing intimacy. Our teaching should not be based on “thou shalt not”, but on something as fundamental as exploring the implications of honesty, equality and responsibility as characteristics of healthy relationships.

Emotions and crisis of values

Emotions have taken over from reason and science among today's youth ... it (can be) a positive shift ... However, “how I feel” has become the major criterion on what is right and wrong. Pleasure is frequently considered an absolute value ... The demands of solidarity and justice are frequently not taken into account ... Everything goes. There are no objective criteria.

We rightly say that emotion must be balanced by reason, but we rarely say that reason must be balanced by our feelings. In most cases, our emotions tell us the truth. To ignore impassioned expressions



of opinion with clichés like “don’t get emotional” is to risk rejecting important insights. If you’re delighted about something, believe that it’s good for you. If you feel that the requirements of love ask you to break a traditional directive, you may be right. As Boran says, we must learn to respect all the dimensions of human personality in presenting the gospel message.

Re pleasure: Jesus was not ascetic. (See his saying contrasting his approach to John the Baptist’s in Mt 11:18-19.) But our tradition is imbued with a negative attitude towards pleasure. Of course, pleasure should not become an “absolute value” overriding the well being of oneself and others. Pleasure should be accepted for what it is — a God-given delight.

Solidarity and justice are “frequently not taken into account” by *anyone* in our society, youth or adult. In spite of what we would prefer to believe, money and power are the primary motivating factors in most people’s lives. Jesus knew that well; his teachings about the dangers of wealth “terrify us” with their radical demands, as Pope Benedict stated in his book *Jesus of Nazareth*.

Few North American adults consider solidarity and justice to be primary values in their economic lives. Don’t blame youth. They’re only copying what they see in their elders’ behaviour.

“Everything goes. There are no objective criteria.” In my opinion this is a false characterization of contemporary teenage decision-making. For a variety of reasons, young people are developing their own standards of behaviour, which are in some ways more correct than the values that the tradition seeks to impose. They may be mistaken in some cases, but I believe that we elders have been mistaken as well. Believers tend to decry the secular value system, but often secular values are more supportive of human rights than traditional teaching.

*Most young people do look within,
and wonder about their abilities
and disabilities, about how
they appear to others,
and about the meaning
of their lives.*

Permanent commitment

To commit oneself to something for a lifetime is considered impossible ... No one choice is seen as definitive.

I wonder about the possibility of binding lifelong commitment.

The intention to make marriage last for life (for example) is a good intention, but even in the New Testament exceptions were made for certain types of marriage breakdown. Jesus’ moral wisdom about lifelong marriage is true wisdom: it enunciates what is truly best. But factors like unfaithfulness and brutality towards spouse and children sometimes make divorce the correct choice. Subsequently, people who have suffered marriage breakdown may try again to live according to the wisdom of Jesus in a new marriage. The challenge for every believer is to apply the wisdom of Jesus to the circumstances of one’s own life.

Begin where they are

To identify how we can help young people hear God’s call in the midst of so many other voices, it is important that we begin where young people actually are in terms of their personal needs and feelings.

Start with their interests. The new priority they give to needs and feelings is a good thing ... We are not going to win them over by just talking at them ... Some of these interests are: to love and be loved; to be recognized; to have material security in order to develop other aspects of life; to have emotional fulfillment in interpersonal relationships; to be kind and to be treated kindly; to give meaning to one’s life; to transcend oneself; to be part of a human group and to count on it for dealing with life’s challenges and for building a better world.

This section is pure gold. It’s worth re-reading and remembering.

Most young people are besieged with fast-moving stimulation and are not inspired by traditional value systems. “Many church leaders speak a language and represent a value system that does not appeal to young people.”

Work on the language we use

In describing a successful training course for youth leaders in Latin America, Father Boran emphasizes how its Christian leaders had integrated the following biblical spirituality in their lives:

The seed must die to give much fruit; the redemptive value of the cross and of the power that lies in weakness; the resurrection that comes through an experience of suffering.

Beautiful as those ideas are, the language is precisely the traditional symbolic language that Fr. Boran admits does not appeal to young people. It doesn’t help to tell a young person who is failing in school that “the seed must die before it can bear fruit;” you can’t tell a youth who is flipping hamburgers and lusting after hot wheels about the power that lies in weakness. We have to work on the language we use to convey these beautiful ideas. We have to realize that many young people are not good at poetry, and if we use religious platitudes we may have lost them forever. That’s why my children’s generation are living thoughtful and principled lives while their religious foundation is only a faint memory. ■

Noel Cooper is a retired Catholic teacher.

Bridging Aboriginal Spirituality and Catholic Faith

When I attended Shawanosowe School in my home community on Whitefish River First Nation until Grade 4, I learned about native spirituality. We focused on the Medicine Wheel and Seven Grandfather Teachings. Since Grade 5 I have been enrolled at Sacred Heart School in Espanola, Ontario. Both these experiences have provided an opportunity for me to learn about my faith and spirituality. I have tried to include both teachings in my daily life in an attempt to bridge Aboriginal spirituality with my Catholic faith.

My Grandma Olive, who attended residential school, was a traditional dancer and keeper of our culture. She was able to bridge Native spirituality and her Catholic beliefs. She would attend Sunday Mass and later dance at our traditional Pow Wow gathering. I do the same. I happen to be a Grass Dancer and continue to pray in my own way.

Bible and Native Legends

To me one of the most important faith lessons is, even in the toughest times we still must show God and others our love. I do this in my daily life by being respectful to my teacher and fellow students.

In stories from the Bible and the Native Legends there always is a moral on how to live life. I use these teachings in my life to be unselfish and to be kind and help others. For example, when my Grandpa was not well, I helped him in and out of the car, pushed his wheelchair and was a shoulder he could lean on.

Living the Golden Rule

We all know the Golden Rule: treat others the way you want to be treated. As a student I have always tried to be kind and courteous to those students who don't normally get that kind of attention. I have said a kind word, used a positive gesture, shared my lunch and tried to make someone feel better. Funny, people have done the same for me. As many people say, "What goes around comes around."

Native prayer

In Native language class we pray every day and thank the Creator for life and the day. We also ask for help to walk a straight path. We ask God for forgiveness when we sin against Him. When I admit to God that I have done wrong it makes me feel better and it feels like a relief. I pray for my family, friends and relatives so that the Creator may bless them. In our Native tradition, we are taught to pray for others and not to ask anything for ourselves except for help to be kind to others. It is just hoped that others will pray for us.

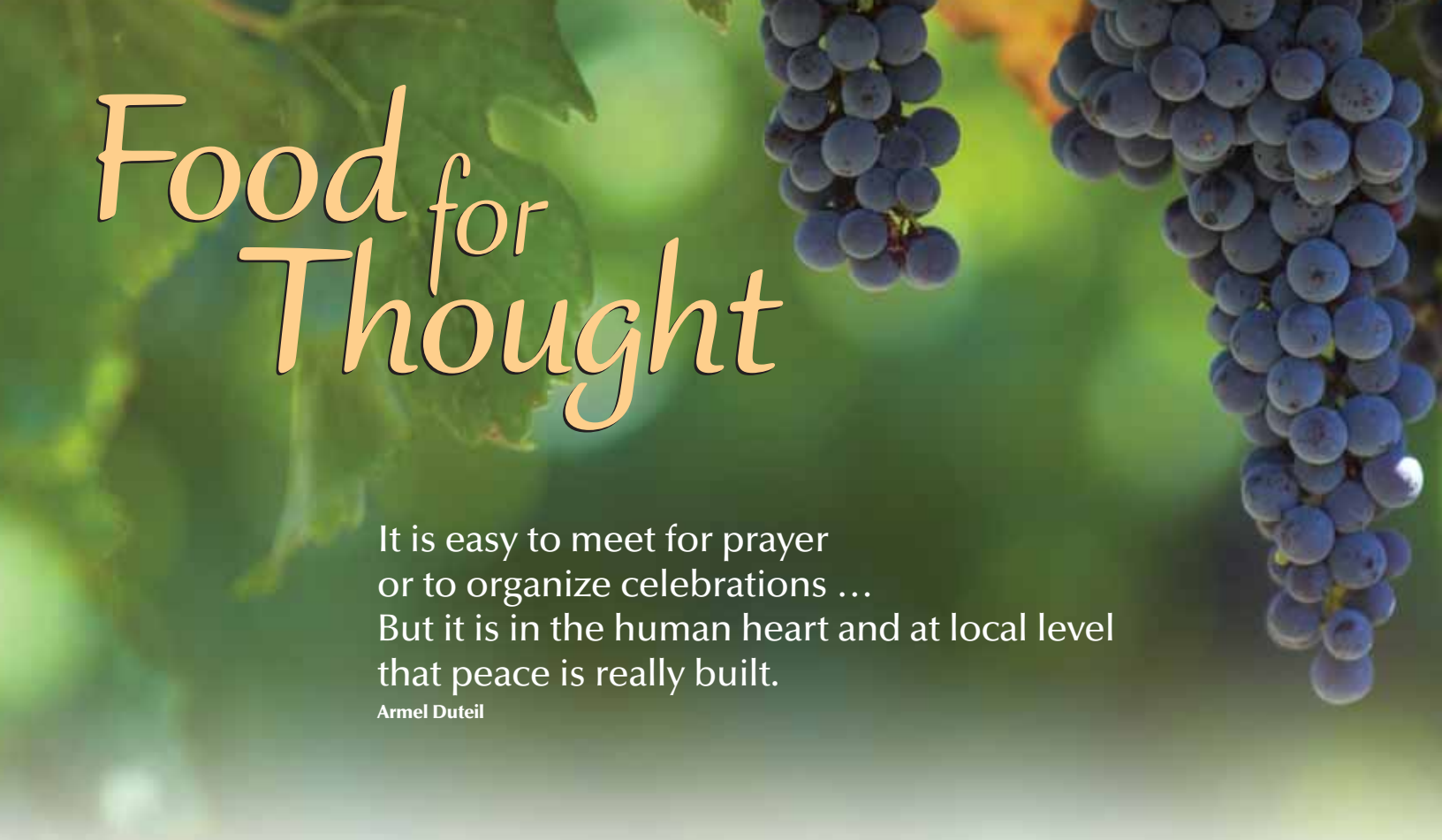
Each student should learn to accept themselves and to show respect and kindness to others. It is important to respect and accept everyone's culture, as that enhances our ability to be understanding. We want to have strong young people who live in harmony with each other and who will carry the message of truth from generation to generation. ■

Zachary McGregor, Grade 8, Sacred heart Catholic School, Espanola, Ontario spoke to the Canadian Catholic School Trustees Association 2008 Conference.

The Gospel is announced to the people. They live in a particular kind of culture, so they receive it in that culture. And that's when the Gospel is really planted, when it becomes part of that culture. That never really happened with the aboriginal people.

James Weisgerber
Archbishop of Winnipeg





Food for Thought

It is easy to meet for prayer
or to organize celebrations ...
But it is in the human heart and at local level
that peace is really built.

Armel Duteil

You cannot preach the Gospel from the strong to the weak. The Gospel can only be preached from the weak to the strong ... The Catholic church is, in the eyes of many, reduced to a state of weakness. Many of the external props that supported it have been knocked away. But I believe this is providential: "It is when I am weak that I am strong" (St Paul)

Columban Heaney OCSO

I sought you, Lord, by still waters,
I searched for you in green fields,
I waited for you on the mountain's summit.
But I met you in the city's clamour,
I heard you in the orphan's cry,
I found you in the war-torn buildings —
Responding to our neighbour's needs
we find your peace,
the peace that crosses barriers and unites nations

John Johansen-Berg

We have taken the first important steps towards ending the bitter culture of Either-Or, of Them versus Us. Now we must build a new culture of Both, each accepting that there are different perspectives and practices, each patient with the other as we get to know each other better in a growing spirit of understanding and outreach.

Mary McAleese
President of Ireland

The contemporary secular age is an age of spiritual seeking, especially among young people. The response of many churchmen is to press forward with their definitive answers, even before the questions have been formulated.

Charles Taylor

When you click on *God.com* expect the unexpected. And you may even get to hear peals of heavenly laughter along the way because, as you know, nothing makes God laugh as much as people who make plans.

Margaret Silf

Why receive Christ unless you hope to become more Christ-like? Why call yourself a Christian if you have no interest in trying to live the gospel?

Dorothy Day



Centre: Fr. Bob Colburn blesses Brottier House.
Right: Mr. Shamsi (left) and Fr. Alex Osei
cut the celebration cake.



Brottier House

The Spiritan Refugee Center at 523 Birchmount Road, Toronto was blessed and officially opened by Fr. Bob Colburn CSSp, Provincial Superior, on February 2nd, 2009.

Among those present were Fr. Alex Osei CSSp, the Director of the facility as well as many other Spiritans including Joy Warner, the coordinator of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation activities. Mary Sharif, Ngugu Kamau, Martin Mark and Yosief Araya from Catholic Cross-Cultural Services were also present, as were Mary

Burns and other members of St. Joseph's Parish Refugee Outreach, Fr. Peter McKenna C.S.J., Director of Becoming Neighbours, Wendy Hooker, Vice Principal and Linton Soares, Chaplain at Neil McNeil High School and many other friends and benefactors.

Mr. Shamsi and his five children, the first refugees to be welcomed in Brottier House, were also present and received a great welcome from all.

Appointments

John Geary CSSp who is now on the academic staff of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, reports that he is enjoying lecturing in the English Faculty there.

Locky Flanagan CSSp is now at his post as the Spiritual Director of the seminarians in Inter-Congregational Seminary in Malawi and sends greetings to his many friends and benefactors in Canada.

Obinna Ifeanyi CSSp has taken up his position as Chaplain of Neil McNeil H.S., a school operated by the Toronto Catholic District School Board in co-operation with the Spiritans.

Novitiate opened in Chicago

On Friday, August 15, 2008 the Spiritan novitiate officially opened in Chicago. This is a joint venture of the North American-Caribbean Region. The novices come from three countries: Haiti, US, and Canada. The five novices are: Robert DiNardo and Bernard Kenol (Canada). Jackson Bonnet and Vontz Samson (Haiti) and Thang Hoang (US). The novitiate team chosen by the Region is Brandon Nguyen and Barney Kelly. The Novitiate now joins the theology community and Spiritan priests working and studying in Chicago to form a dynamic Spiritan presence in the area. There are currently about twenty-six Spiritans in the Greater Chicago area.

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Martha

Punctuated by the chop chop
sleek knife on the cutting block
what I make out is this:
the hush of a breath drawn in
and the creak of dry rattan
as they lean their dusthot bodies
closer into the silent circle.
A murmur of amazement,
a gasp, then the ascending chant
of agreement, "yes yes it is so!"
Sounds in the far room —
like a zephyr wind in the desert.
And I, garlic and oil to my elbows,
mix and pound and knead
with agitation like
tea-water rolling to a boil.
When they have eaten my lamb and honeycakes
to their fill
I shall have missed
the stories I long for.

Mary

All I can see is his foot —
palesmooth and blue-veined,
harnessed with a weary sandal.
Peeping out from under a coarse robe
it seems vulnerable,
like an egg in a dusty nest.
I want to touch this foot
that has trod in the ruts of the marketplace,
has rested on a wave,
drawn circles in the sand.
Although a breath-hum of words now
stirs me like bellows fanning the embers,
I long only to kiss this foot —
to whisper my whisper my
words he knows already
into the graceful curve of his anklebone.
I smooth my cheek to his instep,
like an infant's breath,
barely touching.
But in this brush a taste
of the rust nail that will pierce it.

— Kate Marshall Flaherty